

LOVE, WAR & SPECTERS

UNVEILING THE MYSTERIES OF IRELAND'S ROSS CASTLE

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Ireland's Ross Castle was built in the latter half of the 15th century. A local ruling clan, called the O'Donoghues Mór (Ross), took control of Ross Castle during the changing of the guard from the Second Desmond Rebellion, which occurred in the 1580s via the MacCarthy Mór.

The castle then went to Sir Valentine Browne, who was the ancestor of the Earls of Kenmare. The castle was a stronghold and one of the last castles to surrender to Oliver Cromwell's Roundheads in what was called the Irish Confederate Wars. The use of artillery was a success in bringing down Ross Castle. The artillery was brought in by boat from the River Laune.

Lord Muskerry (MacCarthy) held the castle against Edmund Ludlow, who had an army of 4,000 foot-soldiers, along with 200 horses. Ludlow's army didn't get the credit for taking down Ross Castle; it was the boat with artillery that broke down the fortification.

There was a prophesy that nothing will bring down Ross Castle, except for a warship — and that is exactly what happened. The prophesy came true. One of the strangest legends about Ross Castle is that O'Donoghue jumped out of a window from one of the high towers with his horse, table and library and now he lives in a great palace at the bottom of the lake.

The Ghosts of Ross Castle

Ross Castle is a majestic fortress that overlooks Lough Sheelin, which is one of Ireland's midland lakes. During its prime, Ross Castle was a fantastic strategic defense fortress. As such, Ross Castle has seen its share of death during various skirmishes that occurred at this location.

A ghost that wanders the castle and surrounding land is Richard Nugent — aka the Black Baron. The Black Baron had control of this castle in the year 1536. He was known for his cruel streak, which often led to death for



The imposing facade of Ross Castle, a 15th-century stronghold that has witnessed clan power struggles and surrendered only to a prophesied warship. A fortress where legends and history intertwine.



The corridors of Ross Castle are home to apparitions and shadow figures, including English soldiers and the merciless Black Baron. The resident ghosts are a haunting reminder of a turbulent past. (Photo: [Heritage Ireland](#))

people living on his land. In one case, a woman baked a loaf of bread and placed it on her windowsill. A dog happened upon the loaf of bread and made off with it. The lady saw a beggar nearby and, not knowing the stray dog stole the bread, she yelled, "Thief, thief!" at the beggar.

The Black Baron apprehended the beggar immediately and had his men build a gallows on the spot. He hung the beggar right there and then. The Black Baron was merciless; it didn't matter that the beggar told him that he did not steal the bread. There were also witnesses who told the Baron that a dog stole the bread. But, he didn't care and hung the beggar anyway.

Shadow people have been spotted the castle, as well as full-bodied apparitions of English soldiers walking toward the castle and then mysteriously disappearing.

Glowing red eyes have been seen in the lake itself. When fishermen see the red eyes glowing underneath the waters of the lake, their boats start rocking. And several fishermen have fallen off of their boats. Some believe that the glowing red eyes in the lakes are "red-eyed lake devils." Their main purpose is to drown their victims and take their souls.

Encountering Sabrina the Ghost: A Sad Spirit Looking for Her Lost Love

During my travels in Ireland, I met Evelyn on a fairy-walk. She told me that she saw a ghost at the castle, who was named Sabrina. The story of Sabrina is that she was the daughter of the Black Baron. Sabrina fell in love with Orwin, the son of an O'Reilly Chieftain.

The Black Baron was sworn enemies with the O'Reilly Chieftain and his clan, so Sabrina had to secretly see her boyfriend, Orwin. If Orwin was caught with Sabrina, he could be executed by the Black Baron.

Sabrina and Orwin secretly carried on their affair. One night, they met on a boat at the lake. During their time on the boat, a storm came in and Orwin fell off the boat. He was swept away and eventually drowned. Sabrina was so upset that she locked herself in one of the high towers of the castle and died of starvation.

To this day, Sabrina is seen wandering around by the lake, looking for her lost lover. Evelyn has seen Sabrina with her own eyes and knows that the ghost of Sabrina is very real. ♦